

HELP FROM CHICAGO
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE, CHICAGO . . . PICTURES IN SOUND, WORDS, AND MUSIC OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN AMERICA'S MIDWESTERN METROPOLIS. TODAY, JOHN PAXSON'S REPORT ON A CHICAGO-BASED VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION THAT OFFERS HELP TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY THAT NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE. IN FACT, TODAY'S STORY BEGINS THOUSANDS OF KILOMETERS AWAY FROM CHICAGO, IN AMERICA'S FAR WEST.

NARR: THE CITY OF BILLINGS, MONTANA, IS IN THE HEART OF ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST PROSPEROUS AREAS. SPRAWLING GRAIN AND CATTLE RANCHES SIT AMONG GIANT COAL AND OIL DEPOSITS. AND BILLINGS ITSELF REFLECTS THAT PROSPERITY. TODAY IT IS MONTANA'S LARGEST CITY. ITS POPULATION HAS EDGED OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND CONTINUES TO GROW. THE NEW HOMES IN ITS SUBURBS ARE MODERN AND EXPENSIVE.

STILL, THOUGH, BILLINGS CANNOT CLAIM TOTAL PROSPERITY. THERE ARE POCKETS OF POVERTY, ESPECIALLY ON THE CITY'S SOUTH SIDE. THERE, THE HOUSING IS POORER AND MANY RESIDENTS ARE OUT OF WORK. UNTIL SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THE AREA FACED AN ALMOST CERTAIN PROSPECT OF FURTHER DETERIORATION. BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE CHICAGO-BASED INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS SET UP A SMALL OFFICE IN BILLINGS AND BEGAN BRINGING ABOUT CHANGES:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- PIERCE

"WE TRY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR ANY COMMUNITY TO ACCOMPLISH AN APPROXIMATION OF ITS VISION OF THE FUTURE. IN OTHER WORDS, FOLKS GENERALLY--WHEN THEY ARE IN A DEPRESSED OR OPPRESSED SITUATION--HAVE DIFFICULTY IN GETTING TOGETHER

TAPE: (CONT'D)

SO THAT THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH WHAT THEY WANT TO SET OUT TO DO. AND THE METHODS WE'VE DEVISED ENABLE THEM IN FRESH NEW WAYS TO GET TOGETHER AND REACH A CONSENSUS ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO TOWARD THE FUTURE AND HOW THEY WOULD LIKE TO RUN THEIR LIFE."

NARR: JOE PIERCE ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, WHICH OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEGUN DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AIMED AT HELPING PEOPLE IN DEPRESSED AREAS FIND WAYS TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES.

THREE YEARS AGO THE INSTITUTE SET UP ITS OFFICE IN BILLINGS AND BEGAN ORGANIZING LOCAL MEETINGS AT WHICH COMMUNITY LEADERS WERE SELECTED, LEADERS WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPROVING THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. THE COMMUNITY QUICKLY BEGAN TO FIND A NEW SELF-AWARENESS AND THE RESULTS IN BILLINGS HAVE BEEN GOOD: STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, CLEANUP CAMPAIGNS, YOUTH PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS. AND THE PEOPLE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF BILLINGS HAVE FOUND THEY ARE ABLE TO HALT WHAT HAD SEEMED AN INEVITABLE MARCH OF DETERIORATION.

MISTER PIERCE EXPLAINS THAT THE INSTITUTE WAS STARTED SOME TWELVE YEARS AGO IN CHICAGO AS A NON-PROFIT, PRIVATELY FUNDED ORGANIZATION WITH LINKS TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. ITS FIRST PROJECT CENTERED ON THE POVERTY AREAS ON CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- PIERCE

"WE STARTED IN NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR WORKING IN THE WEST SIDE (BLACK) GHETTO HERE IN CHICAGO AND DEVISED A PLAN AS WE WENT ALONG WORKING WITH THE FOLKS THAT LIVE THERE AND US LIVING THERE TOO TOWARD A SORT OF COMMUNITY REFORMULATION SO THAT THE PEOPLE, AFTER THESE TWELVE YEARS OR SO, HAVE NOW TAKEN OVER THE ORGANIZATION THAT WAS ESTABLISHED AT THAT TIME AND ARE RUNNING IT THEMSELVES. AND OUT OF THAT EXPERIENCE, THAT VERY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, WE'VE HAD EIGHT OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD."

NARR: THE CHICAGO PROGRAM WAS THE INSTITUTE'S FIRST MAJOR SUCCESS. TODAY, AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE OF EFFORT, THE AREA HAS A NEW HALF-MILLION-DOLLAR SHOPPING CENTER, A NEW THREE-MILLION DOLLAR HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM, A NEW HEALTH CARE CENTER AND DOZENS OF SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR ITS CITIZENS. AND IT WAS ALL ACCOMPLISHED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA.

NOW, THAT FIRST PROGRAM HAS DEVELOPED INTO AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT, AS THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS HAS BEGUN OTHER COMMUNITY-HELP PROJECTS IN PLACES LIKE KENYA, BRITAIN, THE PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA.

MISTER PIERCE EXPLAINS THAT THE INSTITUTE TRIES TO OFFER ASSISTANCE TO TOWNS OR COMMUNITIES WITH PROBLEMS. THOSE CAN BE ANYTHING FROM HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, TO AN INEFFICIENT HARVESTING SYSTEM. SOMETIMES IT'S A SIMPLE CASE LIKE A SMALL VILLAGE THAT NEEDS A NEW WATER PUMP.

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IN THE MID-PACIFIC OFFER A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE KINDS OF ASSISTANCE THE INSTITUTE PROVIDES. WHEN ITS VOLUNTEERS ARRIVED THERE SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THE VARIOUS ISLANDS OF THE GROUP HAD A SERIOUS PROBLEM. THEY LACKED AN EFFICIENT CENTRAL SYSTEM OF TRANSPORTATION FROM ONE ISLAND TO ANOTHER.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- PIERCE

"OUR PRESSURE WAS TO PUT IN SOME KIND OF FERRY SYSTEM, BEGINNING IN MAJURO. IT HASN'T BEEN COMPLETELY DEVELOPED YET. BUT TO FIND, TRY TO FIND THE BOATS, THE SHIPS, THE THINGS THAT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO SHIP. AND THEN TO GET A STABLE ECONOMY THERE, THEY NEEDED A WAY TO MARKET

TAPE: CONT'D

THE COPRA WHICH IS THEIR PRIMARY EXPORTABLE PRODUCT. AND WE SOON FOUND THAT IN ORDER TO GET THAT COPRA EXPORTED THEY HAD TO HAVE REGULAR TIMES WHEN THE SHIPS THAT DO COME IN THERE FROM OVERSEAS WOULD BE ABLE TO PICK UP THE COPRA ON A REGULAR BASIS INSTEAD OF GOING HAPPENSTANCE AS IT WAS. AND SO WE BEGAN TO DEVISE SOME KIND OF A REGULAR MEETING PLACE AND HARVESTING TIME THAT WENT ALONG WITH THE SEASONS OF THE WAY THE CROP WOULD COME ANYWAY, SO THAT THEY COULD HARVEST AND THEN HAVE A CHANCE OF SELLING THE COPRA AT A SENSIBLE PRICE IN THE WORLD MARKET."

NARR: CERTAINLY NOT ALL OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE MARSHALL ISLANDS HAVE BEEN OVERCOME. BUT SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AND THE INSTITUTE CONTINUES ITS WORK THERE.

MISTER PIERCE SAYS THE INSTITUTE'S ACTIONS ARE BASED ON A SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY -- THE BASIC BELIEF THAT, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE GUIDANCE, ANY COMMUNITY HAS THE IMAGINATION, THE RESOURCES AND THE LEADERSHIP TO OVERCOME ITS PROBLEMS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- PIERCE

"THE BASIC THING WE'RE AFTER IS THAT IN EVERY SITUATION THAT EVERY PERSON HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE A FULFILLED LIFE. AND BY THAT I DON'T MEAN SOMETHING ABSTRACT. I MEAN IN HIS OWN ACTUAL SITUATION AND HE HAS THE CHANCE TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT. I SHOULD BE SPEAKING NOT INDIVIDUALISTICALLY HERE BUT A COMMUNITY HAS THE CHANCE TO COME TO TERMS WITH ITS ACTUAL SITUATION AND FIGURE OUT THE WAYS THEY WOULD PROPOSE TO MEET THE CONTRADICTIONS THEMSELVES, NOT TO HAVE OTHER PEOPLE MEET THEM FOR THEM, AND THEN TO ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THOSE DECISIONS THAT THEY PROPOSE TO DO WITH THESE OTHER SETS OF METHODS THAT WE'VE DEVISED OVER THE YEARS."

NARR: JOE PIERCE, AND THE CHICAGO-BASED INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION TRYING TO SHOW PEOPLE IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES AROUND THE WORLD HOW TO HELP THEMSELVES.

ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO DATELINE, CHICAGO, PICTURES IN SOUND, WORDS AND MUSIC OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN AMERICA'S MIDWESTERN METROPOLIS. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT -----FOR ANOTHER . . . DATELINE.

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